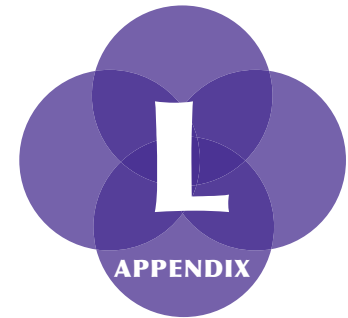


CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT (CSI) PLAN



How Are We Going to Get to Where We Want to Be?

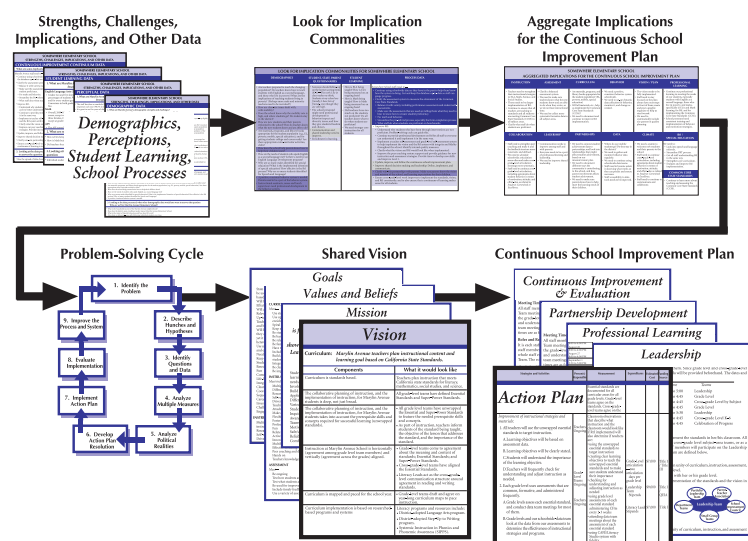
The data profile helps us know *where we are now*, so we can create a plan of action that starts where we are, not where we think we are. Our mission, vision, and goals tell us *where we want to be*, and our gap analysis and problem-solving cycle inform us of *how we got to where we are now*. Our objectives and implication commonalities provide insight into the strategies and activities that will need to take place in order to achieve the vision. All of these pieces are critical for determining *how we are going to get to where we want to be*, as documented in the continuous school improvement (CSI) plan.

CSI plans are different from annual, or typical, school improvement plans as they are written to achieve the vision of the school, not just close a gap, or meet a couple of requirements. This plan is about keeping the entire system together and moving it forward. CSI plans need to be monitored throughout the year and updated as needed, and at least annually.

The CSI plan consists of these items:

- ◆ Baseline Data
- ◆ Goals
- ◆ Objectives
- ◆ Strategies to implement the vision
- ◆ Activities to implement the strategies
- ◆ Person(s) responsible for the activities and strategies
- ◆ Measurement to know if the activities are being accomplished
- ◆ Resources needed
- ◆ Due date
- ◆ Timeline

Shown here is a flowchart graphic, illustrating the process of *Comprehensive Data Analysis to Continuous School Improvement Implementation*. Start with comprehensive schoolwide data analysis on multiple measures of data, determine strengths, challenges, and implications for the continuous school improvement plan, then line up the implications for the four types of data and highlight commonalities across the data. Staff will soon see there are big concepts that need to be addressed in the plan. These big concepts, recorded as aggregated implications, along with the vision and contributing cause analyses, are used to create a CSI plan to implement the vision.



| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Purpose | The purpose of this activity is to use the comprehensive data analysis and shared vision to create one continuous school improvement plan for the school. |
| Target Audience | A cross-representative team of school staff and school community. |
| Time | Overall, this planning activity will stretch over a couple of weeks and will go back and forth to full staff for review and revisions. |
| Materials | Self-stick notes (3x3 and 3x5), chart pad paper, masking tape, markers, and a large amount of wall space. Also, computer and projector. |

Overview

Continuous school improvement planning takes into account implications from comprehensive data analysis, contributing cause analyses, the school vision, and school goals to create the action details for implementing the vision. A continuous school improvement plan is different from an annual school improvement plan; it takes the entire system into consideration and moves it forward to the vision, as opposed to making small adjustments to the status quo.

It is not necessary to have every staff member involved in creating a school improvement plan. While it is important that all staff agree with the strategies, it can become cumbersome and inefficient if too many people are working on the plan at the same time. We recommend that the Leadership Team draft the plan, then take it to staff for review, improvement, acceptance, and commitment to its implementation.

Process Protocol

- Step 1. Enroll a Planning Team.** Enroll a representative group of staff members, not just those who think alike, and not just the leadership team. Include stakeholders such as parents, community, and students. This team will lead the development and draft of the plan, then bring the plan back to the whole staff to review and suggest changes. Although five to eight people is a good size for a functioning team, the more change required of staff to implement the vision and plan, the more individuals need to be involved at the plan creation level.
- Step 2. Review the Data.** The action planning team reviews the multiple measures of data analysis (that the entire staff analyzed together) and that answers the question, *Where are we now?*
- Step 3. Determine Contributing Causes.** Analyze the underlying reasons for the problems or needs that emerge from reviewing the data. (Use the *Problem-Solving Cycle*, Appendix I.)
- Step 4. Learn New Concepts.** The data will show what is not working, as well as if there are subgroup needs not being met. Staff must learn new concepts before creating a vision, or they will find themselves with the same vision.
- Step 5. Create/Revisit the School Vision.** If the vision is done well, it will be very clear what needs to be put in the plan and implemented, with respect to *curriculum* (what we teach), *instruction* (how we teach the curriculum), *assessment* (how we assess learning), and *environment* (how each person treats every other person).
- Step 6. Set Goals.** Schoolwide goals need to be set with the whole staff before the actual writing of the plan commences. Goals are intended outcomes of the vision. They are stated in broad, general, abstract, and largely measurable terms. We should have only two or three school goals. Write each broad goal on the top of a piece of chart pad paper. Example: *All students will be proficient in all subject areas.* Goals should:
 - ♦ Give the school a long term vision.
 - ♦ Be realistic.
 - ♦ Drive action to the purpose and vision of the school.
 - ♦ Have at least one objective that describes how the goal will be measured.
 - ♦ Help the school reach district and state goals.

Process Protocol (Continued)

Goals should not:

- ♦ Specify how the schools will achieve the goal.

Benefits of goal setting:

- ♦ Achieve more.
- ♦ Improve performance.
- ♦ Increase motivation to achieve.

Step 7. Identify Objectives. Draft objectives that will close the gap for each of the goals. Objectives are goals that are redrafted in clearly tangible terms, to close gaps. They must be grounded in the data. Objective statements are narrow, specific, concrete, and measurable. When writing objectives, it is important to describe the intended results, rather than the process or means to accomplish them. Write each objective on a large self-stick notes and place under the appropriate goal that is written on the chart pad paper. Objectives are SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Trackable.¹

Example: *The percentage of grade four students achieving the reading comprehension standard will increase from 80 to 90 by Spring 2014.*

Step 8. Determine How the Objectives will be Measured. Objectives are measurable statements. Determine what assessment tools and strategies will be used to know if the objectives are being met or have been met.

Example: *The percentage of grade four students achieving the reading comprehension standard will increase from 80 to 90 by Spring 2014, as measured by the state reading assessment exam.*

Step 9. Identify and Group Strategies to Achieve the Objectives. Brainstorm and discuss different strategies to reach the objectives, making sure the vision is reviewed and contributing causes of the gap(s) have been analyzed. Your comprehensive data analysis will provide aggregated commonalities to consider as well. Group the strategies under the objectives.

Example: *To increase the number of students reading on grade level by 10 percent, the strategies might include:*

- ♦ professional learning in teaching reading for all teachers.
- ♦ study how reading is successfully taught in other locations.
- ♦ coach each other to implement new strategies.
- ♦ determine how to implement standards at every grade level.

Step 10. Actions Required to Implement the Strategies. Below each strategy, list the actions that need to be accomplished to implement the strategies (i.e., *study the learning standards, study the research on reading, review the student-level data*).

Step 11. Arrange Strategies and Activities. Arrange the strategies and activities in chronological order. (Keep the version for later reference and fine-tune the plan in chronological summary form, starting with the action to be taken first.)

Step 12. Determine How Achievement of the Actions Will Be Measured. For each activity, determine how you will know if the action is being implemented and the impact of its implementation.

Step 13. Use a Planning Template. Using a planning template, label columns—strategy/action, person responsible, measurement, resources, due date, and timeline. Place the reorganized strategies

¹Conzemius, A., & O'Neill, J. (2005). *The power of SMART goals: Using goals to improve student learning*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Process Protocol (Continued)

and actions in the action column in a manner that is easiest for staff to utilize later. In the column next to each action, identify the person ultimately responsible for the action. Try not to use team names like Language Arts Action Team in the person responsible column. Accountability is most effective if the responsibility is delegated to an individual. Responsible persons determine how accountability reviews are conducted, and how to talk with one another about fostering and demonstrating accountability (example template is shown at the bottom of Figure L-1)

- Step 14. Establish Due Dates.** In the column next to “person responsible,” write in the due dates. For each strategy or activity (depends on the topic and structure for implementation), determine when the activity absolutely must be completed. In the columns that represent months, weeks, and sometimes days, make notations that will indicate when each activity will begin and when it will be completed, by showing an “X” in the cell. Indicate the duration by marking a line between the “Xs” across the months.
- Step 15. Determine Resources.** Determine the resources required of each strategy and activity. This budget, developed in conjunction with the CSI plan, will determine the financial feasibility of the actions for each year. Alterations are made simultaneously and balanced back and forth, while looking for items that can leverage other items. Dollars sometimes limit activities. School staff are often surprised, however, to discover that many times what they have to spend is equivalent to what they can do in a year’s time. If the latter does not hold true, the school staff have important and specific information (i.e., the vision, plan, and budget) to utilize in seeking additional support for their efforts. Note that the budget plan is a part of the CSI plan and that all school funds are used with the one resulting CSI plan. Everything in the school should be working toward that one CSI plan and the one school vision. The planning team must have a clear understanding of all budget resources.
- Step 16. Refine the Plan.** With the first draft of the plan complete, review the elements and the big picture of the plan. Below are some guiding questions:
- ◆ Will this plan lead to improved student learning?
 - ◆ Will this plan help implement the vision?
 - ◆ Are the objectives about improved student learning for *all* students?
 - ◆ What evidence do we need to know if the objectives are being met?
 - ◆ Will the strategies lead to attainment of the objectives?
 - ◆ Do the strategies address contributing causes?
 - ◆ Are there strategies/actions that can be further collapsed?
 - ◆ Will all staff members know what is expected of them?
 - ◆ Does the plan include new learnings required of staff? If so, has training and support been incorporated for each area?
 - ◆ Are the time frames realistic?
 - ◆ How will you keep the ultimate goal of improved student learning for all students at the forefront of everything you do?
 - ◆ How often will the plan and strategies be monitored?
 - ◆ Whose job is it to monitor the implementation of the plan?
 - ◆ How will new staff members learn about the plan?
- Step 17. Communicate the Plan.** Determine how the continuous school improvement plan will be documented, communicated, reported, and updated. Communicate progress toward the attainment of the school improvement goals and objectives in newsletters, staff bulletins, websites, and bulletin boards.

Process Protocol (*Continued*)

- Step 18. Monitor the Implementation of the Plan.** A part of refining the continuous school improvement plan is ensuring that everything in the plan is aligned to the implementation of the vision, including the leadership structure, curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional learning, etc. When staff begin to implement the plan, all parts of the plan need to be monitored, regularly. The measurement column for the strategies and activities provide a means for monitoring. We recommend that the Leadership Team check the plan for implementation each month, remembering that implementation of a continuous improvement plan requires collaboration and flexibility on the part of the monitors.
- Step 19. Evaluate the Plan.** The entire continuous school improvement plan must be evaluated, with the vision and school goals as targets. This comprehensive evaluation will evaluate the parts and the whole of the plan to indicate if the goals, objectives, and strategies are leading to the attainment of the vision. (See *Evaluation of Plan*, Appendix U.)

This activity will take many iterations, and is done best with a small group, and reviewed by the larger group. Bring copies of the shared vision, values and beliefs, purpose, mission, goals, and aggregated implications of your data analysis work. You may want to post large versions of these items around the room.

Comments to the Facilitator

As groups identify actions, the actions will begin to collapse. For example, actions might include *professional learning in integrated instruction*, *project-based learning*, and *hands-on math and science*. If considered separately, this professional learning could stretch out over years. If considered comprehensively, the professional learning could end up with one facilitator who can help staff translate these elements into grade-level and subject-area implementation.

Figure L-1

